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ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates the pedagogic aspects of the Yugoslavian Serbocroatian-English Contrastive Project. The project carried out a contrastive analysis of the phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical structures of English and Serbocroatian, and an error analysis in the use of English parts of speech and sentence parts. The investigation noted deviations in the use of parts of speech of a morphological or lexical nature and deviations in production of grammatical sentences. One major cause of such deviations is interference from the native language; incorrect analogy in applying a general rule to all cases, interference from another foreign language, errors from the transitional phase of language learning, and incomplete mastery of the target language are other causes of errors. The contrastive results were first tested using the findings of error analyses. The pedagogical material was tested in actual classroom teaching. Systematic experiments with written multiple-choice, transformation and translation tests given to advanced learners of English checked the research by revealing language errors or interference. Errors found were classified and charted, and details from the report on the present tense illustrated the importance of the testing and of contrastive analysis to pedagogy. (CHK)

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R. FILIPOVIC: TESTING THE RESULTS OF CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

The Yugoslav Serbo-Croatian - English contrastive project[1] regards CA as having two main values: general linguistic and pedagogic. The general linguistic value is that it can show what the role of this subdiscipline is in linguistic description and how it can help us to analyze and describe more precisely some phenomena of two individual languages whose systems are being contrasted. The pedagogical one should produce, first, bases for foreign language teaching materials, second, better organization of the materials, i.e. the order in which individual items are taken up in teaching, and third, improved organization of the classes themselves, as for instance the amount of time to be devoted to introducing and reviewing various points.[2]

What we propose to do in this paper is not only to test the results of CA but also evaluate them pedagogically. In our project more attention has been paid so far to the pedagogical value of CA[3] and therefore only the applied - pedagogical aspect of CA will be discussed here.

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However, the pedagogical value of CA has been challenged several times and some attempts were made to restrict its application in language learning. Error analysis /EA/ has been opposed to CA for the reason that "contrastive linguistic analysis - no matter how refined - can only point toward a potential learning problem or difficulty" while "error analysis can tell the intensity of difficulty, or the size of the problem".[4] It has further been claimed that "according to contrastive analysis learner difficulties are mainly made up of differences in the source and target languages", and that "it is questionable to select language learning materials solely from the viewpoint of the contrastive analysis theory".[5]

I have already mentioned several times that the Yugoslav CA

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project considers contrastive linguistic analysis alone inadequate to achieve all the above mentioned pedagogical values.[6] Since the start of our work we have been aware of limitations to the findings of CA and of advantages of the results that can be achieved by EA. Therefore we established two parallel groups of researchers; one on CA of the structure of English and S-C, and the other on error analysis in the speech of learners of English in the S-C-speaking area.

The first group carried out CA at four linguistic levels, analyzing about 50 different topics of the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical structures of E and S-C. The second group, working on EA, studied errors in the use of the English parts of speech and the main parts of the sentence.

In the course of CA several papers were written[7] disclosing the results of the analysis of each individual topic. Each paper contains three parts: a/ an analysis of the topic on E and S-C material made on the basis of general works, specialized literature on the problem, and the analyzer's own knowledge and experience; b/ a concrete CA documented by material from the corpus /contrastive concordances/; c/ a pedagogical section giving practical implications / usable in teaching/.

EA, whose frame title is Morphological and Syntactic Errors in the Speech of Learners of E in the S-C-Speaking Area, resulted in three MA theses each examining one group of errors: a/ Errors in the morphology and syntax of the parts of speech /excluding the verb/,[8] b/ Errors in the morphology and syntax of the verb,[9] c/ Errors in the syntax of the sentence.[10]

The immediate results of this investigation are several types of deviations: a/ deviations from the rules in some parts of speech of a morphological or lexical nature /e.g. 1. errors in formation - wrongly chosen formative elements in substantives, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, 2. wrong grammatical forms,

especially in the plural of substantives and in the present and the preterite of verbs, 3. errors in pronoun gender and number, 4. double negation with negative forms of pronouns and verbs, 5. incorrect comparison, 6. false pairs, 7. syntactic errors - adjectives for adverbs, the anaphoric one, the article, the choice of tenses, the incorrect use of the passive and the active, sequence of tenses, etc., etc./ and b/ deviations from the rules for producing grammatical sentences /e.g. 1. incorrect word-order, 2. omission of elements, 3. repetition of elements, 4. superfluous elements, 5. incorrect embedding of clauses, 6. errors in building constructions smaller than clauses, etc., etc./.

Several possible causes for the above mentioned deviations were identified: 1/ One of the main causes of morphological and syntactic errors is interference from the native language. On the syntactic level difficulties and errors arise from differing distribution of various parts of speech in English and Serbo-Croatian /e.g. the use of an adverb instead of an adjective/. The conflict between a highly inflected language like S-C and a less inflected one like E is particularly obvious in sentence structure. While the former has a relatively free word-order, in the latter the order is fixed, which causes frequent syntactic errors in the S-C-speaking area.

This very common cause of errors is due to the learner's converting partial overlap into complete overlap. Careful contrastive presentation of E material, development of a feeling in the learner that inter-language relations are never one-to-one, and construction of drills to make these complex relations automatic, are the suggestions for correction made by our EA investigators.

2/ Another cause of errors, especially morphological ones, is incorrect analogy which a learner tries to establish within the foreign language. He tries to apply a general rule to all cases /e.g. adding the plural ending -s to all nouns, or the compara-

tive ending -er to all adjectives, etc./.

3/ A cause of deviation can be the fact that the learner knows or is learning another foreign language. He applies the rule of the other language to E. This is very common on the syntactic level where for instance a wrong choice of verbal tense can be due to the learner's knowledge of the use of the same tense in the other language.

4/ Some errors and deviations occur in the so called "transitional phase", which occurs after the learner has given up his native language system as a model, but has not yet completely mastered the system of the target language.

5/ A further cause of morphological, syntactic, and lexical deviations is incomplete mastery of the target language system due to the teaching methods used.

The types of morphological, syntactic, and lexical deviations, together with their possible causes, suggest that with a proper methodological approach to E teaching and an adequate grading of the teaching material a large proportion of errors could be avoided or corrected.

On the basis of the results obtained in EA we are working on a systematization of errors typical for S-C-speaking learners of E. This new system, which we call a general approximative system or the compromise system, will serve its purpose, we hope, in the teaching process by giving an idea of errors made by S-C speakers when learning E.[11] As such it will be of some good use to the text-book writer and the practicing teacher in their work.

Both teams working simultaneously used each other's results and very often we had the impression that one could not have worked successfully without the other. The EA investigators when trying to explain the cause of deviation for some items

used the basic findings of the CA analysts. And the analysts working on CA quite often consulted the corpus of errors compiled by the EA team workers. One of the EA investigators stated in her report that the results of CA of S-C and E helped her "establish some areas of overlap, recognize, classify, systematize, and predict some errors", sometimes even "establish some of their causes".[12]

The best and the most obvious connection between the work of the two teams is in the practical goal of their work. Both tried to find the pedagogical implications of their research: the CA team in the pedagogical section of the reports on individual topics and the EA team in their suggested systems for correcting and eliminating particular types of errors. The suggestions for the teaching implications of their work are not and need not always be identical for each topic they have investigated. Their results were combined later when they served as a basis of pedagogical materials, the teaching material used in classes. These materials demonstrated the applicability of the findings of both CA and EA in the teaching process.

Now it becomes clear why both analyses were carried out simultaneously. Our assumption was that full application of CA in foreign language teaching can be obtained only if it is combined with EA; in other words,if the results of CA are checked by the findings of EA. This was done in the course of our work on CA, particularly when we started writing pedagogical materials.[13] This checking represents the first /but not the only/ stage of testing the CA results.

The pedagogical material, written for each topic by pedagogical advisers /specialists in teaching methods/ together with an analyzer, was demonstrated under classroom conditions and thus evaluated in the actual teaching process. Here another testing factor was added: the analyzers' and pedagogical advisers' personal experience with difficulties and errors in teaching E.

Since they themselves are practicing teachers of E, they are well qualified to test the materials specially adapted for teaching E in the S-C-speaking area. This is then the second stage of testing the results of CA.

In order to ensure the maximum applicability of the results obtained in CA and EA systematic experiments had been organized in several schools at the advanced level of teaching E. This was the third stage of testing in which each topic was covered by a set of written tests. These tests were prepared for all the areas of interference found by the analyzers in the course of their work on CA of S-C and E. Some additional information about types and causes of errors was acquired by applying EA to spoken and recorded material, while this stage of testing was being carried out by means of specially designed written tests.[14]

About 500 learners of E on an advanced level /having studied E for about four or more years/ were tested. The tests were designed to check the basic points of interference discovered by CA analyzers and treated in their reports.[15] Very often complex tests had to be used, for example in the testing of verbal tenses, as they covered results of several reports. For instance, when testing the areas of interference in the use of the present tense in E the results of several reports were involved since the present tense may be used for all three time-spheres: past, present and future.

Three types of tests were used: multiple choice, transformations, and translation from S-C into E. Multiple choice tests were used to check the S-C learner's ability to choose the correct form out of a number of given items. Items used as distractors were chosen from the areas of interference and errors that were found out by the EA team. /This is one more example how useful it was for us to work on both analyses - CA and EA - simultaneously./ The number of distractors depended on the result of EA but we

tried not to work with fewer than four items, although in a few cases we worked only with two items.

Transformation tests showed primarily deviations in morphology. They also were based on the findings of EA.

The third type of tests - translation - showed the greatest number of deviations: in the choice of vocabulary, spelling, various morphological errors, syntactic errors both in choice of tense and word-order. The number of errors did not seem to depend on whether the test consisted of separate sentences or combined pairs of sentences.

In marking and evaluating the tests we concentrated on the points of our interest only, i.e. the points of interference treated in CA reports. After the tests had been classified according to the items, they were subjected to evaluation and classification of errors. Here is an example of our procedure illustrated by testing the use of the present tense.[16] All items were divided into two main groups: the present tense simple and the present tense continuous. These two groups were further divided into three subgroups: multiple choice, transformation and translation. Each item was classified into correct and incorrect with the help of a native informant. Errors were classified according to types of tests used. Multiple-choice items were further classified into several groups according to distractors. Transformations appeared in two forms: the inversion type and the wh-questions. The errors were divided into syntactic errors and morphological ones. Translation proved to be the most difficult set of tests to evaluate but also indispensable for the purpose of analyzing the interference between L_s and L_t, and consequently for our specific purpose: testing the results of CA.

After classifying the errors in using the present tense, 28 tables were made with a clearly worked out scale of errors and their numerical data. The correct items were written in blue,

the errors in red. In tables with sentences where transformations were required, errors in wh-questions were written in green. In the tables of translation items, pairs of sentences had their respective numerical data worked out, so that it was quite evident which part of the pair, which verbal form showed most deviations.

Every table has its own title /the present tense continuous or simple/, the number of answers and the type of tests applied. The table contains the correct form and the number of correct answers as well as the distractors, the incorrect forms - errors and their number. Percentages are given for each form used, first the percentage of correct answers to total answers, and then also the numerical relation for all errors.

In the CA report on the Present Tense in English and Serbo-Croatian the analyzer has described the following areas of interference between the structures of E and S-C:

> "In S-C the imperfective present covers the meaning of the E continuous and partly also that of the E simple present. For this reason the imperfective present will be a strong source of interference because the S-C speaker will constantly tend to use the E continuous present as its equivalent. This equation of the imperfective present with the continuous present is due to the fact that the perfective present only expectionally has the value of the E continuous present".[17]

To test this point the following tests were produced and their results analyzed:

1/ Multiple choice tests for the continuous and simple present with 6 items each in which the time of the action was expressed by an adverb of time or was clearly implied. The result was:
a/ The correct choice - the continuous form - was made in

75.25% to 90.25% of answers; errors in the choice - the simple present instead of the present continuous - range from 2.25% to 22%. The number of erroneous choices is smaller if the time of action is expressed by an adverbial adjunct of time /like now, right now, at this moment, etc./ and larger if the time of action is only implied. The number of errors is smaller if the verb is a common one /like: listen, sit, work, drive, etc./ and larger with less common verbs /like: enjoy, leave, etc./. Both facts involve the system of teaching English and even the teaching material used.

b/ The correct choice - the present simple - has a wider range and was made in 24.75% to 93.25% of answers; the erroneous choice - the present continuous instead of the present simple was made in 11.5% to 58.5% of answers. Here again the adverbial adjunct of time /like after school, every week, etc./ seems to influence the percentage of correct choice of the present tense, while a temporal when-clause indicates a larger number of erroneous choice. The verb declare, which does not seem to be used very often in our teaching materials, since it is rather low in frequency lists, shows the correct choice - the present simple - in 54.5%, and the erroneous choice - the present continuous - in 41.5%. The largest number of errors occurred with the verb feel where the erroneous choice - the present continuous - was made in 58.5% of answers, and the correct one - the present simple - only in 24.75% of answers.

2/ Translation from S-C into E offered some interesting results and contributed in its way to the final evaluation of these tests. Here we did not find only the two main alternatives: simple present vs. present continuous. The result was: a/ The correct choice - the present continuous - was made in sentences where the time of the action was implied by context, in 60.25% of answers and in those where the time was implied in an exclamation in 37% of answers. The erroneous choice - the present simple - was made only in 6.75% of answers in the first case and

8.25% of answers in the second case. All other erroneous answers represent various morphological and semantic erros typical for translations from S-C into E.

b/ The choice of the present simple and the present coninuous was further tested in pairs of sentences with the same verb but different adjuncts of time. When the adjunct required the use of the present simple the correct choice - the present simple - was made in 50.25% to 65% of answers. /The erroneous use of the present continuous occurred only in 1-3% of answers./ When the adjunct required the use of the present continuous the number of correct answers was even smaller, in 8.25% to 17.75% of answers. The erroneous choice - the present simple - was made in 25% to 38.5% of answers. Time and space do not allow us to refer to the other tests of the translation type. As a conclusion based on them all we may state that the learners of E in the S-C-speaking area tend to use the present simple instead of the present continuous much more often than the other way round. This finding is not in complete agreement with the statement made by the CA paper on the Use of the Present Tense in English and Serbo-Croatian. It is therefore a valuable contribution to our work on the pedagogical materials achieved through this system of tests.

We came across several such disagreements between the results of CA and those of the tests, a fact which justifies the third stage of testing, a rather complex and time-consuming procedure.

In conclusion, I can only state that testing the results of CA serves a very useful purpose in expanding and refining the findings of CA and EA and in providing some new insights which guide our work in producing the final version of pedagogical materials which we have been deeply engaged in writing.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to all those who co-operated in this research: two teams of researchers, one that worked

on CA and another on EA, as well as to all practicing teachers who tested the findings of both CA and EA in their classes.

Notes

[1] Filipović (1968), (1971 a), (1971 b)

[2] Filipović (1971 b, pp. 31-32)

[3] Filipović (1971 c)

[4] Alatis (1968, p. 3)

[5] Olsson (1972)

[6] Filipović (1971 b, pp. 61-65), (1971 c, pp. 1-2)

[7] Filipović (1971 c, pp. 50-66)

[8] Andrassy (1971, pp. 7-31)

[9] Bilinić (1971, pp. 32-59)

[10] Kranjčević (1971, pp. 60-80)

[11] Filipović (1972)

[12] Bilinić (1971, p. 59)

[13] Vilke (1971, pp. 81-97, 98-111)

[14] Filipović (1971 c, pp. 65-66)

[15] The results of all the tests will be printed in our publication Pedagogical Materials.

[16] The use of the present tense was tested by Jasna Bilinić, whose report will appear in Pedagogical Materials.

[17] Spalatin (1970, p. 142)

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E. FÜLEI-SZANTO: KONTRASTIVE BESCHREIBUNG DER DEONTISCHEN MODALITÄT IM ENGLISCHEN UND SPANISCHEN SPRACHSYSTEM

Für die kontrastive Beschreibung zweier Sprachen ist die Richtung der Beschreibung immer von außerordentlicher Wichtigkeit. Man vergleicht die Ausgangssprache mit der Zielsprache oder umgekehrt. Die beiden Deskriptionen sind dann ziemlich unterschiedlich voneinander.

Man kann der Richtung der Beschreibung weniger Bedeutung geben, wenn die Deskription von der mehr oder weniger identischen Tiefenstruktur ausgeht. Dann braucht man nur die zu den beiden sprachlichen Oberflächen führenden Transformationsregeln miteinander zu vergleichen.

Eine derartige Beschreibungstechnik muß sich aber auf einen klaren und detaillierten Begriff der Tiefenstruktur stützen. Die Theorie der Tiefenstruktur ist eine formelle Theorie und soll das, "was man zu sagen hat", in seiner Entstehung analysieren. Eine jede Beschreibungstechnik der Tiefenstruktur stößt auf Hindernisse, wenn man das Gedankenmodell nicht auf mehrere Ebenen verteilt. Das Chomskysche oder Fillmoresche Modell scheint die Schwierigkeit zu haben, die exakte Hypothese der Tiefenstruktur nicht in genügendem Maße definiert zu haben. Eugene A. Nida betrachtet in seiner Übersetzungstheorie die Tiefenstruktur als eine geringe Menge von Kernsätzen. Wenn man aber über die genauere Struktur dieses Begriffes, besser gesagt dieser psychischen Ebene, nachdenkt, muß man anerkennen, daß diese Schicht der Entstehung der menschlichen Rede mindestens aus drei Ebenen besteht:

1. die ungegliederten Bewußtseinsinhalte,
2. die kognitive Ebene des Tiefensatzes, und
3. die emotionell-volitive Ebene des Tiefensatzes.

Die kognitive Ebene besitzt solche Operatoren, die gleichzeitig

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